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## The importance of Ukraine's political and economic relationship with the United Arab Emirates for the Lublin Triangle

**Abstract**

The presented research paper demonstrates the dynamic development of political and economic relations between Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates as well as their importance for projects involving the implementation of the Lublin Triangle. The results and findings of the research show that without taking into account the state-owned company from Dubai DP World, the success of the strategic cooperation between Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania in transportation, as well as in the energy sector, will be limited. For this reason, it is necessary to include the Emirate company in some projects of the Lublin Triangle. Moreover, strategic alliances of the United Arab Emirates with states and international organizations of the Euro-Atlantic community, including the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, should be noted. In this context, the strategic importance of the UAE's partnership with Central and Eastern Europe should be taken into account. Moreover, a close, deep alliance with the United Arab Emirates will contribute to increasing the impact of the Lublin Triangle states on transatlantic partners. In addition, the UAE, being an economic and trade hub where the interests of Europe, the United States of America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia intersect, can contribute to increasing the role of Central and Eastern Europe in the global dimension. The Emirati company DP World is one of the largest global corporations, with around 150 branches in the world and working for seaports, terminals, industrial parks, logistics and economic zones. So, this Emirati economic entity has great potential in ensuring Central and Eastern Europe an effective supply chain and stable development of trade in the upcoming increasingly aggressive economic wars.

**Keywords:** Ukraine; United Arab Emirates; UAE; Poland; Lithuania; Lublin Triangle; Intermarium; Energy Sector; Transportation Routes; Logistics; LNG; Natural Gas; Grain; Sea Port; DP World

**JEL Classification:** A10; A12; F02; F42; O53

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**Важливість політичних й економічних відносин України з Об'єднаними Арабськими Еміратами для Люблінського трикутника**

**Анотація**

Представлене дослідження демонструє динамічний розвиток політичних й економічних відносин між Україною та Об'єднаними Арабськими Еміратами, а також їх важливість для проектів, пов'язаних із реалізацією Люблінського трикутника. Результати та висновки дослідження показують, що без урахування державної компанії з Дубая DP World успіх стратегічної співпраці між Україною, Польщею та Литвою в галузі транспорту, а також в енергетичному секторі, буде обмежений. З цієї причини необхідно включити компанію з Еміратів у деякі проекти Люблінського трикутника.

Окрім того, слід зазначити стратегічні союзи Об'єднаних Арабських Еміратів із державами та міжнародними організаціями євроатлантичної спільноти, у тому числі з Європейським союзом й Організацією Північноатлантичного договору. У цьому контексті необхідно враховувати стратегічну важливість партнерства ОАЕ з Центральною та Східною Європою. Більше того, тісний, глибокий союз з Об'єднаними Арабськими Еміратами сприятиме посиленню впливу держав Люблінського трикутника на трансатлантичних партнерів. ОАЕ, будучи економічним і торговим центром, де перетинаються інтереси Європи, Сполучених Штатів Америки, Близького Сходу, Африки та Азії, можуть сприяти підвищенню ролі Центральної та Східної Європи в глобальному вимірі. Еміратська компанія DP World – одна з найбільших глобальних корпорацій, що має близько 150 філій у світі й працює в морських портах, терміналах, індустріальних парках, логістичних й економічних зонах. Таким чином, цей економічний суб'єкт Еміратів має великий потенціал у забезпеченні Центральної та Східної Європи ефективним ланцюжком поставок і стабільного розвитку торгівлі в майбутніх все більш агресивних економічних війнах.

**Ключові слова:** Україна; Об'єднані Арабські Емірати; ОАЕ; Польща; Литва; Люблінський трикутник; Міжмор'я; логістика; транспортні маршрути; СПГ; природний газ; зерно; морський порт; DP World.

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#### **Важность политических и экономических отношений Украины с Объединенными Арабскими Эмиратами для Люблинского треугольника**

##### **Аннотация**

Представленное исследование демонстрирует динамичное развитие политических и экономических отношений между Украиной и Объединенными Арабскими Эмиратами, а также их важность для проектов, связанных с реализацией Люблинского треугольника. Результаты и выводы исследования показывают, что без учета государственной компании из Дубая DP World успех стратегического сотрудничества между Украиной, Польшей и Литвой в области транспорта, а также в энергетическом секторе, будет ограничен. По этой причине необходимо включить компанию из Эмиратов в некоторые проекты Люблинского треугольника. Кроме того, следует отметить стратегические союзы Объединенных Арабских Эмиратов с государствами и международными организациями евроатлантического сообщества, в том числе с Европейским союзом и Организацией Североатлантического договора. В этом контексте следует учитывать стратегическую важность партнерства ОАЭ с Центральной и Восточной Европой. Более того, тесный, глубокий союз с Объединенными Арабскими Эмиратами будет способствовать усилению влияния государств Люблинского треугольника на трансатлантических партнеров. Кроме того, ОАЭ, являясь экономическим и торговым центром, где пересекаются интересы Европы, Соединенных Штатов Америки, Ближнего Востока, Африки и Азии, могут способствовать повышению роли Центральной и Восточной Европы в глобальном измерении. Эмиратская компания DP World – одна из крупнейших глобальных корпораций, имеющая около 150 филиалов в мире и работающая в морских портах, терминалах, индустриальных парках, логистических и экономических зонах. Таким образом, этот экономический субъект Эмиратов имеет большой потенциал в обеспечении Центральной и Восточной Европы эффективной цепочкой поставок и стабильного развития торговли в предстоящих все более агрессивных экономических войнах.

**Ключевые слова:** Украина; Объединенные Арабские Эмираты; Польша; Литва; ОАЭ; Люблинский треугольник; Межморье; энергетический сектор; транспортные маршруты; логистика; СПГ; природный газ; зерно; морской порт; DP World.

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#### **Znaczenie politycznych i gospodarczych stosunków Ukrainy ze Zjednoczonymi Emiratami Arabskimi dla Trójkąta Lubelskiego**

##### **Streszczenie**

Prezentowana praca badawcza przedstawia dynamiczny rozwój relacji politycznych i gospodarczych pomiędzy Ukrainą a Zjednoczonymi Emiratami Arabskimi (ZEA) i ich znaczenie dla projektów związanych z realizacją inicjatywy Trójkąta Lubelskiego. Wyniki badań ukazują, że bez uwzględnienia państwowej firmy z Dubaju DP World powodzenie strategicznej współpracy w dziedzinie transportu i energii pomiędzy Ukrainą, Polską i Litwą będzie ograniczone. Z tego też powodu należy włączyć emiracką firmę w planowanie niektórych projektów Trójkąta Lubelskiego. Ponadto, należy dostrzec strategiczne sojusze Zjednoczonych Emiratów Arabskich z państwami i organizacjami międzynarodowymi wspólnoty euroatlantyckiej, w tym Unii Europejskiej oraz Organizacji Traktatu Północnoatlantyckiego. W tym kontekście należy wziąć pod uwagę strategiczne znaczenie partnerstwa ZEA z Europą Środkowo-Wschodnią. Ponadto, bliski, głęboki sojusz z Zjednoczonymi Emiratami Arabskimi przyczyni się do zwiększenia siły oddziaływania państw Trójkąta Lubelskiego na partnerów transatlantyckich. W dodatku, ZEA będąc hub ekonomicznym i handlowym, gdzie

przecinają się interesy Europy, Stanów Zjednoczonych, Bliskiego Wschodu, Afryki i Azji, może przyczynić się do zwiększenia roli Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w wymiarze globalnym. Emiracka firma DP World jest jedną z największych globalnych korporacji w sektorze usług logistycznych, zarządzania terminalami portów morskich, strefami ekonomicznymi, parkami przemysłowymi, posiadając około 150 oddziałów na świecie. Tak więc, ten emiracki podmiot gospodarczy ma ogromny potencjał w zapewnieniu Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej skutecznego łańcucha dostaw oraz stabilnego rozwoju wymiany handlowej w nadchodzących coraz bardziej agresywnych wojnach gospodarczych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Ukraina; Zjednoczone Emiraty Arabskie; Polska; Litwa; ZEA; Trójkąt Lubelski; Międzymorze; sektor energetyczny; trasy transportowe; logistyka; LNG; gaz; zboże; port morski; DP World.

## 1. Introduction

For Poland, relations with Ukraine have a unique dimension. Without an independent Ukraine, there will be no free and independent Poland (Brzezinski, 1994, p. 80). Therefore, Poland is the first country in the world to recognize Ukraine's statehood after the independence referendum on December 1, 1991. In 1992, both countries signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation, while accepting the border. On the other hand, in March 1994, Poland and Ukraine signed a declaration on the principles of mutual relations, recognizing their strategic importance for both countries. In the following years, Poland focused on efforts to integrate with the Euro-Atlantic structures, while Ukraine went through a challenging period of strengthening its statehood. After joining NATO and the European Union, Poland consistently strives to include Ukraine in the Euro-Atlantic community. However, the neoliberal hybrid that appeared in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s initially contributed to the same phenomena, i.e. the combination of economic and political interests that led to the oligarchization (Ágh, 2019, p. 364). In the case of Ukraine, it was particularly visible, also in the economic dimension. Russia often used a ban on the import of certain goods from Ukraine, which caused 84% of Ukrainian exports to other markets in 2004. On the other hand, Ukraine could not quickly change its strategic dependence on Russia in gas (approx. 75%) and oil (approx. 80%) imports (Brusylovska & Koval, 2019, p. 137). The most important Polish financial institutions, such as PKO BP (Kredobank) or PZU SA (PZU Ukraine), started to operate in Ukraine. However, the enormous potential on both sides was not realized. In 2005, the Industrial Union of Donbas (ISD) became one of the most important investors in Poland by purchasing Huta Częstochowa. Moreover, in 2007, ISD purchased the majority stake in Gdańsk Shipyard on the Baltic Sea, which is of exceptional symbolic importance for Polish Solidarity and the victory over communism. However, the following year, the deal was challenged by the European Commission as violating EU rules. One of the most strategic joint projects launched in 1996 is the Odesa-Brody oil pipeline, which is to ultimately connect the Black Sea with the Baltic Sea. For this purpose, in the presence of the presidents of Poland and Ukraine, on April 14, 2008, an agreement was signed between Sarmatia and Granherne, implementing the comprehensive project «Odesa-Brody-Płock-Gdańsk». Exactly 10 years later, in April 2008, ILF Consulting Engineers finalized the Feasibility Study for the Brody-Adamowo oil pipeline construction project and the optimization of the technical parameters of the project (Szeptycki, 2016, p. 67). An important joint project between Poland and Ukraine was the 2012 European Football Championship, both in terms of promoting both countries and infrastructure development. However, as a result of the armed conflicts and the hybrid war in 2014-2015, Ukraine's GDP decreased by -20%, and the number of emigrants from Ukraine has increased enormously (Bite, Szombathelyi, & Vasa, 2020, p. 205). In such a situation, the need to expand the transport and communication infrastructure as well as the development of the energy industry were considered to be of key importance. It is predicted that by 2030 annual GDP growth should be at the level of 8% (Pysar, Fediunin, Vynogradova, & Chornii, 2020, p. 26). At that time, the relationship between Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates was very dynamic. At the same time, in August 2016, the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) was adopted, which puts particular emphasis on the development of infrastructure and cooperation in the field of energy between the countries located between the Adriatic Sea, the Baltic Sea, and the Black Sea (Krzymowski, 2020a, p. 91). Just a few months later, in October 2016, the Ukrainian government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Emirate company DP World on the development of ports in Ukraine and logistics capacity on the Black Sea. In November 2019, the UAE Minister of Infrastructure and Development visited Warsaw, where an agreement on maritime transport was signed between Poland and the United Arab Emirates, negotiated as early as April 2015 (Krzymowski, 2017, p. 193). At the beginning of 2020,

the state-owned UAE company DP World bought a majority stake in the strategic Ukrainian TIS Container Terminal, near Odesa. Thus, the UAE, with plans for further strategic investments in infrastructure in Ukraine, becomes an important part of a wider 3SI strategy, including Lithuania-Poland-Ukraine cooperation.

On July 28, 2020, in Lublin, Poland, the ministers of foreign affairs of Lithuania (Linas Linkevičius), Poland (Jacek Czaputowicz) and Ukraine (Dmytro Kuleba) announced the establishment of a new initiative, strategic and economic formula for regional cooperation under the name of the Lublin Triangle. It is worth noting that for Ukraine this is the first formal cooperation initiative of Central European countries in which it will participate (Dordević, 2020). The initiative of the Lublin Triangle refers to the Union of Lublin established in 1569 and a common long history, including when in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was the largest state in modern Europe. The announcement of the Lublin Triangle initiative is the consistent implementation of programs aimed at including Ukraine in a closed circulation of cooperation with the countries belonging to the Euro-Atlantic community. One of the tools for this purpose and in line with the initiative of the Lublin Triangle is the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LitPolUkrBrig) based in Lublin. It was formally established in September 2014, actually formed in the fall of 2015, and was fully operational in January 2017. It should also be noted that the Lublin Triangle is part of a wider plan related to the implementation of the strategic goals of the Three Seas Initiative, established in 2016. In this context, Ukraine has a special place in this strategy as an element creating the North-South corridor, both in terms of infrastructure and the development of the energy sector (Kapoor, 2020). In October 2020, during the Economic Forum Odesa, by signing a cooperation agreement between the Polish port of Gdańsk on the Baltic Sea and the Ukrainian port of Odesa on the Black Sea, they announced that the Ukrainian sea and land terminals should be a new transport corridor between Poland and Ukraine, as a strategic part of the international transport network (Ukrinform, 2020). The state-owned company from the United Arab Emirates DP World with a majority stake in the TIS Container Terminal, near Odesa and further investment plans in Ukraine, must be taken into account when implementing the Lublin Triangle projects.

A huge number of scientific papers related to Poland's relations with Ukraine or Lithuania were created. However, there has been no published study on the Lublin Triangle from the perspective of the role and significance for it by the United Arab Emirates. Therefore, this work is a completely new topic in the discussed area. In addition, due to the new dynamics of the development of economic and political relations of the UAE with Ukraine, including the involvement of its business in strategic projects related to critical infrastructure, the presented scientific analysis highlights the need to take into account these dynamics when developing plans and projects related to the Lublin Triangle. In this context, this research paper proposes taking into account the realities of the international business activity of the United Arab Emirates, including in this part of Europe, for the effectiveness of the Lublin Triangle initiative. Therefore, the research goal of the work is to answer the research question of whether Ukraine's relations with the United Arab Emirates are important for the implementation of projects related to cooperation within the Lublin Triangle. In order to find an answer to this type of practical research question, the empirical method of scientific research was adopted. As part of it, first of all, numerous source documents as well as selected scientific publications were analysed. In addition, the presented research work is the result of 10 years of author's observations, analyses, as well as direct participation in processes related to the topic, including, among others, as an Ambassador of Poland in the United Arab Emirates, or Senior Adviser to Minister for International Cooperation, General Director of Expo Dubai 2020, involved in supporting Ukraine in deepening its relations with the UAE. Therefore, the part of the work regarding the results as well as conclusions is mainly based on the author's own 10 years of analysis and experience. Moreover, the presented research material has been thoroughly verified, with multiple comparisons of factual documents as well as scientific studies.

## 2. Brief Literature Review

In order to support own, unpublished analyses, apart from primary sources, the author of the presented research work also used secondary sources. The concepts and vision of the role and importance of Ukraine for Poland and global powers, presented in the literature by Brzeziński (1994), were useful. Moreover, the most recent elaboration of the discussed area was mainly used. Dordević (2020) indicated that the Lublin Triangle is the first regional cooperation

forum of Central Europe, of which Ukraine has become a part of it. Moreover, Kapoor (2020) highlights the maturation process of this initiative and the importance of infrastructure and energy cooperation. Hyndle (2020), on the other hand, shows the situation in Lithuania after the parliamentary elections that took place in October 2020, emphasizing that strategic cooperation within the Lublin Triangle, including the implementation of infrastructure and energy projects, will be deepened. In this context, Kubiak (2020) recalls the 2019 agreement between Poland, Ukraine, and the USA on the sale of liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Ukraine, and in 2020 the preliminary approval by the Ukrainian government of the readiness to purchase 5.5 billion cubic meters for 20 years which will force the expansion of gas infrastructure in the region. In this sense, Brusylovska & Koval (2019) still show Ukraine's dependence on gas imports from Russia. Therefore, as indicated by Cheban & Dibrova (2020), Ukraine has adopted an energy strategy aimed at diversifying energy sources. Moreover, Buxbaum (2016) notes that foreign investment in infrastructure has become a strategic priority of the Ukrainian government. To this end, as Louppova (2017) underlines, Ukraine has decided to develop strategic cooperation with the United Arab Emirates. On the other hand, Townsend (2016) highlights the involvement of the Emirati company DP World in the Black Sea. In this context, Rahman (2020) shows the wider, global perspective and importance of DP World in the coming times of increasing trade tensions. The amount of Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine bilateral visits to the UAE in 2011-2020 is presented in Figure 1, while the dynamics of these countries' exports to the UAE is given in Figure 2 which proves the economic importance of the interstate relations.

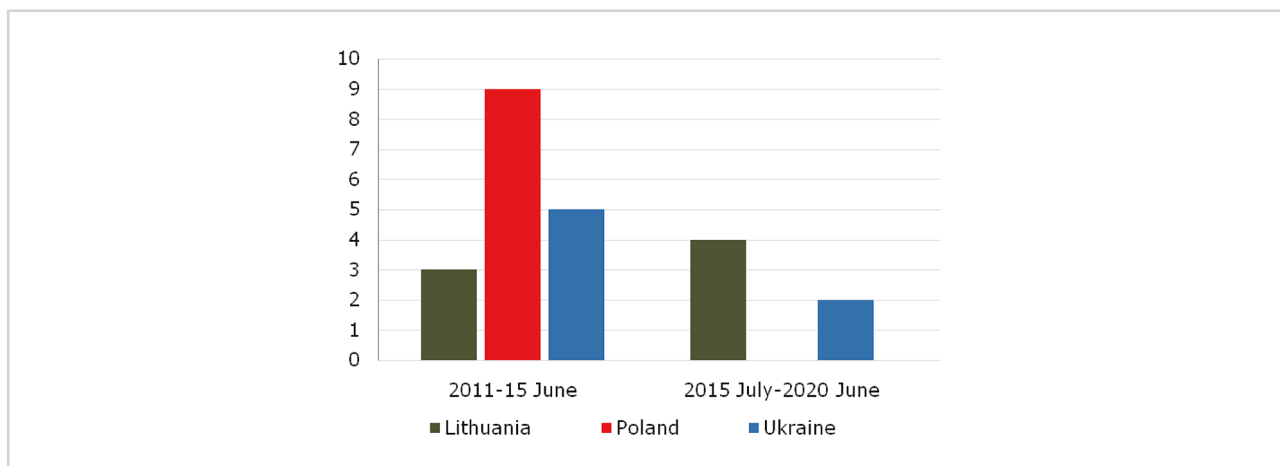


Figure 1:

**The most important official bilateral visits**

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of states statistics (2020)

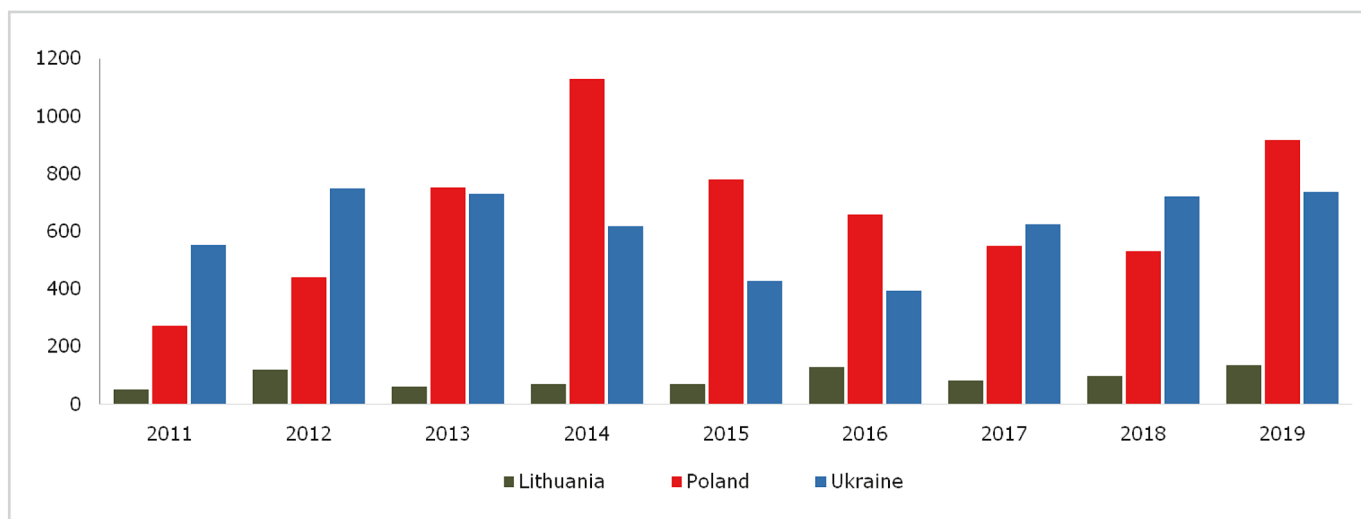


Figure 2:

**Export to the United Arab Emirates**

Source: Developed by the author on the basis of states statistics (2020)

### 3. Purpose

The presented research paper raises the issue related to the implementation of the Lublin Triangle initiative adopted in 2020. At the same time, it points to business and international conditions related to its specific projects. The work draws attention to the importance of Ukraine's relations with the United Arab Emirates, including through the state-owned company DP World and its strategic role for the effectiveness of the Lublin Triangle.

### 4. Results

On January 2, 1992, the United Arab Emirates recognized the statehood of Ukraine, which at the end of the same year established diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates in October 1992. Just a few months later, in April 1993, the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, had the first visit to the UAE. The visit of the head of government gave the appropriate impetus to deepen relations, as a result of which in January 1994 the Ukrainian Embassy was opened in Abu Dhabi. The following years brought the exchange of visits of officials from both countries at different levels and the creation of a legal framework for deepening relations (Embassy of Ukraine in the UAE, 2012a). In this sense, the Agreement on Economic, Trade, and Technical Cooperation was signed in 1995. In January 2002, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Anatoliy Zlenko, came to the United Arab Emirates to prepare for the opening of a new phase of relations. At that time, an Agreement was signed between the National Institute of Ukraine on international security and the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies. Consequently, in January 2003, President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma came to the United Arab Emirates. During this visit, both countries agreed to boost economic relations and adopt a plan to carry out joint investments. As a result of the presidential visit, two agreements were signed the following year, i.e. Agreement for the Promotion and Protection of Investments and Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation. In addition, also in 2004, there were two ministerial visits, in March the UAE Health Minister Hamed A. Al Madfa (Embassy of Ukraine in the UAE, 2012b) visited Ukraine, while the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Kostyantyn Gryshchenko paid an official visit to the UAE in November. As part of the agreements announced in 2003 during the visit of the President of Ukraine to the UAE, in 2005 agreements were signed with the Emirate of Fujairah. On the basis of one of them, a joint Ukrainian-Emirate company «Naftogaz Middle East» was established in order to jointly operate in the oil and gas sector. Moreover, as a result of the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine at the end of 2004, in 2006 a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and the UAE Institute of Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the UAE was signed (Embassy of Ukraine in the UAE, 2012c). The next visit of the President of Ukraine to the United Arab Emirates, which took place in November 2009, was another impulse for dynamizing and deepening the relations. Therefore, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Petro Poroshenko came to the UAE a month later. 2010 was a period of numerous visits in bilateral relations, among others in Ukraine, by H.H. Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chief of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court and Managing Director of the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). Moreover, in May of the following year, the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited Ukraine. During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding on political consultations was signed between the ministries of foreign affairs. Additionally, it was decided to deepen cooperation within the Joint Committee. In May 2011, H. H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan paid the first historic visit of the UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs to both Ukraine and Poland (WAM, 2011).

In October 2012, the second meeting of the Joint Committee was held in Abu Dhabi, chaired by both foreign ministers. Moreover, just a month later, another visit by the President of Ukraine to the UAE took place. It should also be emphasized that in 2012 numerous agreements were signed, i.e. concerning Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters; on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Commercial Matters; on Extradition; on Mutual Protection of Classified Information; Air Transport Agreement. Additionally, MoU on cooperation on the exchange of financial information related to money laundering and terrorist financing were also signed; on cooperation in the field of higher education and research; on cooperation in the field of sports. In order to deepen economic relations, in 2013 a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of a business council between Ukraine and the Federation of CCI UAE was signed (Embassy of Ukraine in the UAE, 2012d). Another important event in bilateral relations was the visit of President Petro Poroshenko to the United Arab Emirates in February 2015, especially in the

context of strategic cooperation in the field of security. At that time, the Agreement on Military-Technical Cooperation was signed. This presidential visit brought a new dimension to the relationship between the two countries. The same year, a Memorandum of Understanding between the National Securities Commission of Ukraine and the Securities and Commodities Authority of the UAE was signed. As a consequence of the visit of the President of Ukraine in 2015, the Agreement on Cooperation in the Military Sphere between the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the UAE was signed in 2016. On the other hand, in November 2017, another visit by the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, to the UAE took place. In the context of developing strategic cooperation, also in the area of space, a Memorandum of Understanding between the State Space Agency of Ukraine and the UAE Space Agency was signed during the visit. In addition, in order to facilitate travel between countries also during the presidential visit, a government agreement was signed on mutual abolition of visa requirements and an Agreement on Cooperation in the Sphere of Culture (MOFAIC, 2017). In addition to the meetings at the highest level and signed agreements, the visit of President Petro Poroshenko to Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone and Jebel Ali Port and the meeting of the president with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the DP World Group Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem was worth noting. It demonstrated the strategic importance of the cooperation with this state-owned Emirati company which was initiated a year earlier in the context of the port of Odessa, as part of a broader investment and logistics plan. A few months later, in August 2018, the UAE-Ukraine Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation took place in Ukraine. During the meeting, the Minister of State Gargash emphasized that the UAE has recently adopted a strategy for the fourth industrial revolution, in which the United Arab Emirates could build a strategic alliance with Ukraine on new innovative technology (Krzyszowski, 2020b). Moreover, the minister underlined that the Emirati business was ready to expand cooperation with Ukrainian partners, in particular regarding investments in ports, the food industry, construction and energy (WAM, 2018a). As part of the decision to diversify its energy sources, Ukraine adopted an energy strategy, under which green energy should reach 25% share in total consumption by 2035. However, achieving this goal will be difficult to reach, given that the share of renewable energy sources in Ukraine is currently several times lower than planned for 2020. The reason for this situation is the lack of effective instruments to support green energy (Cheban & Dibrova, 2020, p. 263). However, two agreements were signed during the committee meeting, i.e. the Memorandum of Understanding in the Fields of Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Other Source of Energy between the Ministry of Energy and Industry of the United Arab Emirates and the State Agency on Energy Efficiency and Energy Saving of Ukraine and Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Emirates Diplomatic Academy and Hennadii Udoenko Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (WAM, 2018b). Following the findings of the UAE-Ukraine Joint Committee, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine and the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment of the United Arab Emirates on cooperation in the Field of Agriculture and Food Safety was signed in 2019.

In October 2016, the government of Ukraine signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Emirate company DP World on the development of ports and logistics capabilities in Ukraine. It was a consequence of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem, the Chairman and CEO of the DP World group, and the Ukrainian minister of infrastructure, Volodymyr Omelyan, as well as the interest in the port of Odessa. The company from the United Arab Emirates is interested in taking advantage of Ukraine's strategic location, recognizing the enormous potential of the Black Sea ports for economic development through dynamic logistics development and attracting investors. In this sense, it should also be noted that DP World serves the Constanta terminal (Romania) as well as the Yarimca terminal (Turkey) in the Baltic Sea region (Townsend, 2016). During his visit to Ukraine, the chairman and general director of DP World Group, Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem also met, among others, with President Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Volodymyr Groisman presenting a letter of intent from DP World regarding his subsidiary P&O Maritime regarding cooperation within the port of Odessa. Moreover, the interlocutors agreed that both the strategic potential of Ukraine, located on the Black Sea, as well as its foreign policy, initiatives and projects in the immediate western environment are in line with the development strategies of the port in Odesa. In addition, Prime Minister Groisman emphasized that foreign investment in infrastructure was one of

the government's priorities (Buxbaum, 2016). Subsequently, the Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, Volodymyr Omelyan, announced that by the end of 2017 DP World, a company from the United Arab Emirates, should start its operations in the port of Yuzhny in the Odesa region of Ukraine, through its subsidiary P&O Maritime FZE. Yuzhny is a multifunctional port in the Black Sea that greatly contributes to Ukraine's exports. In addition, both the CEO of the Ukrainian Seaports Authority Raivis Veckagans, the president of Yuzhny Sea Commercial Port, Vitaly Żukowski, and representatives of the state Investment Council emphasized that the Emirati company DP World with world experience as a port operator is a strategic partner that will help Ukraine become a hub of logistics, stimulating its economic development and increasing foreign investments. Moreover, the decisions to establish a working group consisting of Ukrainian leaders from the port infrastructure sector were announced in order to develop a strategy for its further development. To this end, the Ukrainian and the Emirates have established close cooperation (Louppova, 2017).

As part of a broader cooperation strategy, Emirati DP World bought a majority stake in Ukraine's priority TIS Container Terminal in 2020, which is 20 miles from Odesa, at Yuzhny Port. It is a part of the TIS Group (TransInvestService), with which DP World P&O Maritime Services has a joint venture, providing services to several Ukrainian ports. However, obtaining a majority stake in TIS enables wider and deeper cooperation. This terminal is strategically important as it has the deepest, 52 feet deep, and the longest container berth in Ukraine. In addition, its strategic importance is also determined by its connection with the network of the most developed railway connections in Ukraine, which enables efficient trade and ensuring the functioning of the supply chain (The Maritime Executive, 2020). The Emirati company DP World, headquartered in Dubai, has 123 business units in 54 countries in almost all continents of the world. In this way, it creates a global network of intelligent logistics, providing delivery services in the global market, and thus being an important part of the global supply chain (PortSEurope, 2020). DP World is one of the three largest port operators in the world. This Emirati company processed 71 million TEU in 2019, which is a result exceeding 71 more than all Ukrainian ports combined. DP World is headquartered in Dubai in the largest industrial park in the world, Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA) (Krzymowski, 2020c, p. 8). As the co-owner of TIS and a partner of SD Capital, Andrey Stavnitser emphasized that the purchase of the TIS Container Terminal by the Emirate company DP World is one of the five largest infrastructure investments in Ukraine. In addition, the purchase of additional land by TIS will allow, following the example of the Jebel Ali Free Zone in Dubai, to build a huge industrial park in Ukraine (The Odessa Journal, 2020a).

As the group president and general director of DP World Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem underlined that thanks to the acquisition of TIS Container Terminal, his corporation will contribute to the dynamic growth of trade. For this purpose, the company will use not only the global network of ports, warehouses and economic zones, but also inland logistics through the network of land roads, including railways, well connected with TIS Container Terminal. In addition, it will connect this terminal to the Emirates Unifeeder Group network, which will improve and increase the effective management of the supply chain and enable increasing the commercial dynamics of Eastern Europe. In addition, DP World has established the Digital Freight Alliance, which enables communication with shippers from all over the world within a single online platform. Moreover, the company offers them a huge number of services and an efficient supply chain, enabling them to do business anywhere in the world. Therefore, this Emirati corporation provides huge tools for Ukraine to increase its participation in global trade (DP World, 2020).

In 2019, the Ukrainian container market grew by over 20%. The acquisition of TIS Container Terminal is part of DP World's strategy of building an integrated entire logistics network for the product, from the point of manufacture to the final destination. In addition, it supports the latest IT technology to avoid inefficiencies in the supply chain as well as to pave new trade routes in promising markets (ZAWYA, 2020). The Emirati company DP World pursues strategies of both strengthening its current position and dynamically gaining new opportunities. So, only in the last few quarters, DP World successfully carried out transactions regarding: the transport and logistics company P&O Ferries from the UK, the logistics company Kribhco Infrastructure from India, the port operator Puertos y Logistica from Chile, and the Swissterminal Holding from Switzerland. DP World, anticipating both increasing geopolitical tensions and trade wars, and the consequent turbulences on the global market, wants to be an entity that ensures stable trade (Rahman, 2020).



The concept of building the TIS Container Terminal appeared in 2003 and was completed in August 2008. Since 2013, TIS has been a leader among Ukrainian stevedores in the flow of cargo, having five specialized terminals in the Pivdenny port near Odessa, i.e. «TIS-Grain», «TIS-Mineral Fertilizers», «TIS-Ore», «TIS-Coal» and «TIS-Container Terminal». In 2018, TIS handled 25.7 million tons of cargo, while in 2019 it already handled 33 million tons, which is 28.4% more than in 2018. In addition, in 2019 the TIS container terminal handled 220 thousand TEU containers represented a huge increase in freight traffic by 75% compared to 2018. In addition, the TIS container terminal is committed to improving rail transport. As part of these activities, and together with Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian railway), it runs 15 regular container trains a week on the route to Kyiv, Kharkiv, Ternopil, Dnipro city and Chernihiv (The Odessa Journal, 2020b). On November 27, 2019, the 12th session of the Council of Presidents of Ukraine and Lithuania was held in Vilnius under the chairmanship of both new heads of state. The meeting focused primarily on boosting economic cooperation, reconstructing south-eastern Ukraine and its integration with Euro-Atlantic structures. During the summit, the presidents adopted Declarations on the development of the strategic partnership for 2020-2024. In addition, the defence ministries of both countries signed a Declaration of will to cooperate in the field of cybersecurity, as well as the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania signed a Declaration of Intent on mutual recognition of electronic identification and trust services in electronic transactions. The meeting emphasized that Lithuania has an interest in supporting Ukraine in the context of the security of the region, boosting trade, and the participation of Lithuania and its enterprises in the economic reconstruction of Ukraine. In 2019, trade between countries increased by approximately 40%, reaching over USD 1.5 billion. In addition, in recent years, Lithuanian investments in Ukraine have also grown dynamically, reaching USD 182 million. However, Lithuania expects even greater strategic economic cooperation in areas such as energy and transport. In this context, Lithuanian President Nausėda offered Ukraine gas supplies both from the liquefied natural gas terminal in Klaipėda and a gas connection between Lithuania and Poland, which will be launched by the end of 2021. As part of the transport projects, both parties confirmed the importance of dynamizing cooperation within the Viking Train project, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia and Azerbaijan rail link. In November 2019, during the 5<sup>th</sup> Ukrainian-Lithuanian Economic Forum in Vilnius, the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky emphasized the readiness to implement new projects aimed at deepening economic cooperation between enterprises, companies and individual regions of Ukraine and Lithuania. In addition, the President of Ukraine expressed interest in the Three Seas Initiative and the joint implementation of projects related to the economy and infrastructure (President of Ukraine, 2019). The Lublin Triangle is shown in [Figure 3](#), while the map of the route via Carpatia - in [Figure 4](#).

In 2019, Poland, Ukraine and the USA signed a trilateral memorandum on cooperation in the sale of liquefied natural gas (LNG). On May 27, 2020, the Ukrainian government initially approved the text of the memorandum on the prospects for the import of LNG from the United States. The contract provides for the supply of 5.5 billion cubic meters (billion m<sup>3</sup>) of natural gas annually over a 20-year period. Such volumes, however, will require additional expansion of the gas infrastructure in the region, so it cannot take place earlier than in a few years (Kubiak, 2020). Poland-Lithuania-Ukraine implements strategic goals in the field of energy. In this context, Poland and Lithuania are building a gas connection (GIPL), which should be launched in 2022. By expanding this connection, it will also enable gas to be supplied to Ukraine in the future (Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Lithuania, 2020).

During the Economic Forum, which took place on September 7-9, 2020 in Poland, the Minister of Development, Trade, and Agriculture of Ukraine Ihor Pietraszki emphasized that Poland is currently the second-largest trade partner of Ukraine, which wants to further dynamically deepen economic cooperation (Governmental Portal, 2020). The Presidents of Poland and Ukraine, Andrzej Duda and Volodymyr Zelensky, on October 13, 2020, during the Ukrainian-Polish economic forum in Odesa, noted that the volume of Polish foreign direct investments reaches over USD 800 million. By contrast, trade in 2019 reached almost USD 8 billion. At the same time, the leaders of both countries underlined that in order to develop strategic economic cooperation, it is necessary to expand the logistical infrastructure, both at sea and on land. Moreover, the Polish president emphasized that Poland would support Ukrainian ambitions in the development of Ukraine as a transit country in Eastern Europe (112 Ukraine, 2020). During the forum in Odesa,

Polish President Andrzej Duda presented that the Ukrainian sea and land terminals should be a new transport corridor between Poland and Ukraine, as a strategic part of the international transport network dynamizing trade (Ukrinform, 2020). Moreover, both presidencies participated in the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Polish Baltic port of Gdańsk and the Port of Odesa (Szymański, 2020).



Figure 3:  
**Map of the Lublin Triangle**  
 Source: Military Review, 2020



Figure 4:  
**Map of the route via Carpatia**  
 Source: Conadrogach.pl (2018)

In this sense, in order to increase trade, as the Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine Władysław Kryklii announced in October 2020, the two countries will jointly expand the Gdańsk-Black Sea transport corridor (The Odessa Journal, 2020). In the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the Ukrainian Sea Ports Authority and the Port of Gdansk Authority, joint actions are envisaged to expand the transport corridor between the Polish port and Ukrainian seaports in the Black Sea. To this end, the agreement provides for the establishment of a special group. In addition, the signed agreement will make it possible to dynamize China's trade cooperation through Ukraine and Poland with the rest of Europe. In addition, in order to expand the transport infrastructure, Ukraine has reserved around UAH 5 billion in 2020 for the implementation of the GO Highway project, which is to connect Ukrainian and Polish ports. (Interlegal, 2020). The Ukrainian Minister of Infrastructure, Vladyslav Kryklii, in October 2020 announced that in 2021 will begin the large-scale reconstruction of the M-05 Kyiv-Odesa motorway. It is a part of the Go Highway project connecting the port of Gdańsk on the Baltic Sea with the Greater Odesa port on the Black Sea (Ukrinform, 2020).

In October 2020, parliamentary elections were held in Lithuania, in which the most support (50 out of 141 seats) was received by the Homeland Union - Christian Democrats (TS-LKD) with its chairman Gabrielius Landsbergis. It is worth emphasizing that all parties of the new government are committed to the Euro-Atlantic community. Thus, the strategic goals of Lithuania will be maintained, and the deepening of relations with Poland and Ukraine, including the development of economic projects, especially in the areas of energy and transport, will maintain a high level of priority (Hyndle, 2020). The Ministers of Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine underlined the strategic importance of the intensified cooperation between the European Union, NATO, and the Eastern Partnership countries and pay due attention to the functioning of the Three Seas Initiative. They recognized the benefits of trilateral cooperation in the field of security, in particular the functioning of the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LitPolUkrBrig). They provide for active measures to promote trade and investment, provide better access to regional infrastructure, and improve its quality by intensifying ambitious projects promoting cohesion in the region. They support Ukraine's cooperation with the Three Seas Initiative, as well as cooperation in other regional formats (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, 2020).

## 5. Conclusions

The Intermarium project has been at the centre of Central and Eastern Europe's attention for centuries. Due to significant geopolitical and geostrategic changes, this concept regained importance and relevance in the second half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Soskin, 2017, p. 87). When referring to the discussion on its historical background, it should be noted the Union of Lublin (1569), and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was established based on multiculturalism. At the same time, one of their most important tasks was to contain the ambitions of the powers, including the Ottoman Empire, which at that time also invaded the Arabian Peninsula, on which the current UAE is located. After 100 years, the Turkish Ottoman dynasty took over a large part of Europe, including part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, reaching Vienna, where on September 12, 1683, the Polish king Jan III Sobieski defeated the Turkish army. It was a landmark battle for the fate of all of Europe. Poland continued its military operations with Turkey for several years. However, after 100 years, Poland disappeared from the map of Europe, being divided by three European powers. The end of the First World War made the nations of the Arabian Peninsula free from the rule of the Turks, and Poland regained its independence, and presenting an Intermarium project.

The conducted research and their results indicate that the implementation of the Lublin Triangle initiative should take into account the involvement of the state-owned company from Dubai DP World in the Black Sea region, including in Ukraine. Due to its strategic importance and the commitment of the highest authorities of both Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates to its success, which is linked to the success of Ukraine, this element becomes essential. Moreover, the strategic dimension of the Lublin Triangle and the related Three Seas Initiative should be taken into account. Both strategies are an expression of common interests pursued as part of deeper regional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, aimed at dynamizing both economic cooperation and gaining greater influence on the international arena. At the same time, the foundation of these initiatives is the anchoring of the participating states, including Ukraine, in the Euro-Atlantic community, i.e. in the structures of the European Union and NATO, and close strategic cooperation with the United States. Therefore, when analysing the foreign and security policy as well as economic

activity, including the trade of the United Arab Emirates, its strategic link with transatlantic partners should be emphasized. In this sense, the role and importance of the UAE, a country based on multiculturalism, in which over 200 nationalities live, should be emphasized. A state whose consequences develop strategic cooperation with the countries of the Euro-Atlantic community. At the same time, being active in stopping any symptoms of extremism. From the very beginning, since 2004, the UAE has been an active member of the NATO program - the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), contributing jointly to security and stability in the world. In 2012, the United Arab Emirates was the first MENA country to open its diplomatic mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization with its Ambassador at NATO headquarters. Moreover, it conducts joint consultations and exercises in many areas of security, including energy security. In this sense, in October 2016, the United Arab Emirates signed the NATO Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program (IPCP). The dimension of strategic cooperation with the EU and its members, the United Arab Emirates has been conducting a strategic partnership with Germany since 2004, and a French military base has been located in Abu Dhabi since 2009. In 2018, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation signed an agreement with the European External Action Service to build strategic relations, and the first meeting was held in 2019. It should be noted the first-ever visit to the Arabian Peninsula by Pope Francis in the UAE in February 2019. In 2020 Abu Dhabi, the headquarters of the European Maritime Awareness mission in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) was opened. In terms of cooperation with the United States, the Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA), adopted in 2019, is worth noting. In addition, special attention should be paid to the Middle East peace agreement between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain as well as the Abraham Accords Peace Agreement signed in 2020, a treaty opening wide cooperation between the United Arab Emirates and Israel. Therefore, in this broader geostrategic dimension, the UAE's activity in the Black Sea basin, including Ukraine, should be identified, having a potential impact on the development of the Lublin Triangle and the 3SI initiative.

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